

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 SY-05 /078 W

-----220718 126274 /12/20

P R 140828Z FEB 77 ZEL ZUI HCS 1071W 0522356 H/W ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6255

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 1028

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2)

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, MY, CH, UR

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: TELECAST OF CHAN KIEN SIN'S CONFESSION

REF: (A) KUALALUMPUR 848 (DTG 080148Z FEB 77),

(B) KUALA LUMPUR 0923 (DTG 090823Z FEB 77)

1. SUMMARY. FORMER MCA CHIEF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY CHAN KIEN

SIN CONFESSED FEB 12 TO HARBORING PRO-COMMUNIST

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SYMPATHIES AND PROPOGATING THEM THROUGH HIS POSITION AS

EDITOR OF A MAJOR CHINESE NEWSPAPER BEFORE 1974. CHAN'S

CONFESSION DIFFERED FROM THOSE OF ABDULLAH AHMAD

AND ABDULLAH MAJID IN FOCUSING ON A PRO-PRC RATHER THAN

PRO-SOVIET BRAND OF COMMUNISM AND IN BEING AIMED AT

THE CHINESE POPULATION OF MALAYSIA. HE ADMITTED

TO LITTLE MORE, HOWEVER, THAN THE CONTINUING

PRACTICE OF MOST MALAYSIAN CHINESE NEWSPAPERS, I.E., SLANTING NEWS AND EDITORIALS IN FAVOR OF THE PRC AND AGAINST THE US AND THE USSR. CHAN'S CONFESSION MAY BE A WARNING TO THE CHINESE PRESS TO BE LESS PRO-PRC IN THE FUTURE. ITS LACK OF SUBSTANCE MAY ALSO INDICATE THAT THE GOM HAS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY BY CHAN WHICH IT DOES NOT CARE TO REVEAL. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEB 12 FORMER MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA) CHIEF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY CHAN KIEN SIN MADE THE THIRD IN THE SERIES OF TELEVISED CONFESSIONS BY THE SIX POLITICIANS ARRESTED LAST NOVEMBER. (SEE REFS A AND B). CHAN KIEN SIN (7115/6015/6580, AKA CHAN KEN SIN, TAN KIEN SIEW, TAN KWEE SHEN) ADMITTED DURING THE 15-MINUTE TELECAST THAT HE CAME UNDER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AT AN EARLY AGE AND THAT HE HAD WORKED FOR TWO COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS IN HIS YOUTH. CHAN SAID THAT, AFTER JOINING THE CHINESE LANGUAGE "SIN CHEW JIT POH" IN 1950 AND WORKING HIS WAY UP TO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF IN 1972, HE HAD USED HIS POSITION TO FURTHER THE COMMUNIST CAUSE. CHAN CONFESSED TO ENCOURAGING PRO-COMMUNIST EDITORS AND REPORTERS TO PLAY UP CERTAIN NEWS TO INFLUENCE READERS TO SYMPATHIZE WITH THE COMMUNIST CAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, HE INSTRUCTED THAT EDITORIALS ADOPT A PRO-PEKING AND THUS ANTI-AMERICAN AND ANTI-SOVIET LINE ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. CHAN SAID THAT "SIN CHEW" WAS VERY HARSH ON THE RUSSIANS IN ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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EDITORIALS AT A TIME WHEN MALAYSIA WAS FOLLOWING A NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY AND AN EQUIDISTANT DIPLOMACY IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE MAJOR POWERS. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE LEFT THE "SIN CHEW" IN 1974 AFTER ITS MANAGEMENT ACCUSED HIM OF USING THE PAPER TO PROJECT PRO-COMMUNIST VIEWS. FINALLY, CHAN WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT, AFTER HE LEFT THE PAPER AND BECAME CHIEF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE MCA, HE DID NOT INSERT PRO-COMMUNIST SENTIMENTS INTO SPEECHES HE WROTE FOR MCA LEADERS, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS IN A GOOD POSITION TO DO SO, BECAUSE "I THOUGHT IT WAS TOO EARLY FOR ME TO MAKE SUCH A MOVE. I WAS KEEN TO ESTABLISH MY POSITION BY WINNING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MCA LEADERS. I DID NOT WANT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES AT THAT STAGE." CHAN ENDED HIS CONFESSION AS HAD EX-UMNO DEPUTY MINISTERS ABDULLAH AHMAD AND ABDULLAH MAJID, WITH A DENUNCIATION OF HIS PAST PRO-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES AND A PLEDGE OF LOYALTY TO THE KING AND THE GOVERNMENT.

3. CHAN'S CONFESSION, LIKE THOSE OF ABDULLAH AHMAD AND ABDULLAH MAJID, TOOK THE FORM OF A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH A TV ANNOUNCER. THE QUESTIONS WERE ALL CONSTRUCTED TO ELICIT OBVIOUSLY REHEARSED RESPONSES. MOST OBVIOUS WAS A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ON CHAN'S MCA ACTIVITIES WHICH LED TO A LISTING OF SPEECHES WRITTEN FOR MCA LEADERS, AN EMPHASIS ON THE PRO-GOVERNMENT TONE OF THE SPEECHES, AND THE DENIAL THAT LAN INSERED PRO-COMMUNIST SENTIMENTS INTO THEM.

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USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 SY-05 /078 W
-----141014Z 031716 /20

P R 140828Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6256
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

4. CHAN'S CONFESSION DIFFERS FROM THOSE OF THE TWO UMNO POLITICIANS IN SEVERAL RESPECTS. CHAN'S ACTIVITIES WERE MOTIVATED BY PRO-PRC SENTIMENTS, WHILE THE ABDULLAHS VIRTUALLY (BUT NOT DIRECTLY)

ADMITTED TO TAKING SOVIET ASSISTANCE. IN THIS REGARD, THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO MALAYS' CONTACTS WITH A FOREIGN (I.E. RUSSIAN) MISSION AND CHAN'S CONFESSION OF PROMOTING ANTI-RUSSIAN VIEWS IS STRIKING. ALTHOUGH CHAN AND THE ABDULLAHS WERE ARRESTED AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOM SEEMS TO BE MAKING NO ATTEMPT TO LINK THE CASES, EXCEPT TO LABEL THEM ALL AS PRO-COMMUNIST. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE TWO ABDULLAHS' PRO-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES CLEARLY WERE RELATED TO THEIR UMNO PARTY STATUS, WHILE GREAT PAINS WERE TAKEN (BY CHAN? BY HIS INTERROGATORS?) TO SHOW THAT HE HAD NOT SUBVERTED THE MCA. WE KNOW THAT THE MCA LEADERS WERE OUTRAGED AT NOT BEING INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF CHAN'S ARREST AND THIS MAY REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO PLACATE THEM BY CLEARING THE PARTY'S NAME. (ONE MOTIVATION FOR THE ABDULLAHS' ARRESTS, OF COURSE, WAS INTRA-UMNO DISCORD.)

5. COMMENT: THE ACTIVITY TO WHICH CHAN CONFESSED, I.E., PROMOTING THE PRC CAUSE ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN HIS JOURNALISM, IS NOT UNIQUE TO HIM OR TO "SIN CHEW JIT POH." VIRTUALLY ALL THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE PAPERS HAVE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS PUSHED A PRO-PRC, ANTI-SOVIET LINE IN THEIR EDITORIALS, ESPECIALLY ON ISSUES OF LITTLE DIRECT INTEREST TO MALAYSIA. NOT ONLY IS THIS A REFLECTION OF THE INNATE RESPECT OVERSEAS CHINESE HOLD FOR CHINA AND IDEAS EMANATING FROM CHINA, IT ALSO HELPS TO SELL NEWSPAPERS TO A CHINESE-EDUCATED POPULATION INTENSELY INTERESTED IN THE MOTHER COUNTRY. WHILE CHAN'S DISMISSAL FROM "SIN CHEW" IN 1974 (AND GOM WARNINGS TO OTHER CHINESE PAPERS AT THAT TIME) MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A MORE MODERATE INTERPRETATION OF THE PRC LINE IN THE CHINESE PRESS, THAT LINE HAS CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE PENANG-BASED "KWONG WAH YIT POH" AND "SING PIN JIH PAO." IT MAY BE THAT THE GOM IS USING CHAN'S CONFESSION AS A WARNING TO THE CHINESE PRESS TO DROP THEIR BLATANT ESPOUSAL OF PRC POLICIES. CHAN'S CONFESSION OF ACTIVITIES, NO MORE SUBVERSIVE THAN THOSE OF OTHER CHINESE EDITORS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN JAILED, MAY ALSO MEAN

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THAT THE GOM HAS FURTHER EVIDENCE ON CHAN WHICH
IT DOES NOT CARE TO REVEAL. (FOR SEVERAL YEARS,
WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY GOM PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE
EXPERT C.C. TOO THAT CHAN, WHO IS CLOSE TO
SELANGOR CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CHIEF
LEE YAN LIAN, IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH LEE IN PRC
PENETRATION OF PRIVATE MALAYSIAN CHINESE
ASSOCIATIONS.)
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUALA01028
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770088-1234, D770051-0899
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770245/aaaabnoo.tel
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 KUALA LUMPUR 848, 77 KUALA LUMPUR 923
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3329974
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERNAL SECURITY: TELECAST OF CHAN KIEN SIN'S CONFESSION
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, MY, CH, UR, (CHAN KIEN SIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2ffa6dc7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009